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arm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

Letter No. 2502

April 5, 1991

LINKING FARMING TO THE ECONOMY -- Although farming employs only 2 percent of the work force & generates 1.4 percent of the gross national product, it remains an important link in the world economy because of its interrelationships with other industries, says the current issue of USDA's **Food Review**. Farming has always been tied to the larger economy, says Economist **Kathryn L. Lipton**. However, increased use of machinery, chemicals & other expensive technology, combined with a greater reliance on export markets have strengthened agriculture's economic linkages. Contact: **Kathryn L. Lipton** (202) 219-0880.

FOREST SYSTEM CELEBRATES 100 YEARS -- Secretary of Agriculture **Edward Madigan** says a nationwide series of events is planned this year to help Americans celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the National Forest System. "In 1991 we are celebrating a turning point in American conservation history, the centennial of legislation empowering the president to set aside land for forest reserves," Madigan said. Today the National Forest System comprises over 8 percent of the geographical area of the U.S. Contact: **Kelly Shipp** (202) 447-4623.

HELP FOR DISABLED FARMERS -- USDA has joined with the National Easter Seal Society & other private, non-profit disability organizations to establish education & assistance programs for farmers with disabilities. Nationwide, more than 500,000 farmers, ranchers & other ag workers have physical disabilities that limit their ability to perform essential farm tasks. USDA's Extension Service has awarded between \$80,000 & \$115,000 to eight programs located in Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, New York, Wisconsin & Vermont. Montana, Idaho & Wyoming are sponsoring a joint project. Contact: **Brad Rein** (202) 447-5285.

NASDA FOOD EXPO -- Full service news facilities will be available at the 1991 National Association of State Departments of Agriculture Food & Agriculture Exposition, which will be held April 30 through May 2 in Las Vegas. The show brings more than 300 American companies & their value-added ag products together with more than 1,000 food buyers from around the world. Actualities will be available & you can set up interviews & features, or they can be produced by the on-site radio staff. Contact: **Mark Wallace** (206) 586-6941.

LONGER STORAGE FOR BROWN RICE -- USDA scientists have filed for a patent on a new process that doubles brown rice's storage life to at least a year. The process, which uses ethanol to prevent the rice from turning rancid, could also play a role in increasing exports of brown rice, says **Elaine T. Champagne**, of USDA's Agricultural Research Service. Of 2.5 million metric tons of rice exported by the U.S. in 1990, brown rice accounted for 339,141 metric tons. Contact: **Elaine T. Champagne** (504) 286-4357.

THICKER CATSUP -- USDA is proposing to make you work harder to get your catsup out of the bottle. **Daniel D. Haley**, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, says USDA is looking for comments on proposed catsup standards that would make the catsup thicker. Haley says the standards were requested by the Indiana Food Processors Association, Inc., and major tomato catsup processors who say consumers prefer thicker catsup. **Contact: Clarence Steinberg (202) 447-6179.**

IT'S TIME TO GET STARTED NOW with plans for your home vegetable garden. Draw up a garden diagram, have your soil tested & start transplants from seeds indoors. **Contact: Chuck McClurg (301) 405-4342.**

RURAL ECONOMY -- It will take at least several months to tell how the current U.S. economic downturn will affect rural areas, USDA economists say in the Winter 1990/91 issue of **Rural Conditions and Trends** (**Contact: Sara Mills Mazie (202) 219-0520** for a copy). Several factors appear to be important -- first, farming is much better off now than in the early 1980's; and second, the rural economy has become more service oriented over the last decade. The low inflation, interest rates & exchange value of the dollar should help reduce the negative effects of the recession on rural areas. **Contact: Karen Hamrick, John Kitchen, Elizabeth Mack (202) 219-0782.**

MOST WOMEN NEED TO SPEND more time in the sun during winter, says **Mark Kantor**, an extension food & nutrition specialist. According to recent studies, the ability of women -- especially older ones -- to absorb calcium is largely dependent on the season of year. Calcium absorption & use helps strengthen bones & prevent osteoporosis. This absorption also requires a certain hormone, a special form of vitamin D -- much of which is made by the skin when its exposed to sunlight. **Contact: Mark Kantor (301) 405-1018.**

DID YOU KNOW? Agriculture is the nation's number one industry. Together with its related industries, agriculture provides 21 million people with jobs. The average U.S. farmer produces the food & fiber for 128 people, here & overseas. Ten years ago it was 109 people. **Contact: Kelly Shipp (202) 447-4623.**

POISON-PROOF YOUR HOME -- About three in five non-fatal home poisonings happen to youngsters less than 5 years old. Extension Safety Coordinator **Peggy Caruso** says that in addition to the children who suffer from non-fatal poisonings, some 3,000 adults die each year from accidental ingestion or inhalation of toxic solids, liquids or gases. Caruso has several steps to prevent accidental home poisonings. **Contact: Peggy Caruso (504) 388-4141.**

WATER SUPPLY OUTLOOK REMAINS DIM -- Dry weather & light snowfall this winter have contributed to unfavorable forecasts for much of the West's water supply, according to **William Richards**, chief of USDA's Soil Conservation Service. Richards said even with recent storms, spring & summer streamflows will be below to well-below average for most of the West. **Contact: Ted Kupelian (202) 447-5776.**

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

- AGRICULTURE USA #1765** -- Farming is, indeed, America's most dangerous game, especially for children who work or live on farms. Gary Crawford reports on the growing number of children being hurt or killed in farming accidents & what's being done to counter the trend. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)
- CONSUMER TIME #1247** -- The farmer/food connection; azaleas thrive on neglect; dealing with loss; pet bird problems; a new warning about tanning salons. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)
- AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1755** -- USDA News Highlights; rules on conservation compliance; preparing for new rules on organic farming; U.S. poultry exports double in last five years; U.S. rice being sold everywhere in the world -- almost. (Weekly reel of news features.)
- NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1414** -- More accurate nutrient values; neater newspapers; cost-effective soy inks; U.S.-Soviet research first; unknown wasp attacks corn rootworm. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)
- UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE** -- Wed., April 10, U.S. crop production, world ag supply & demand; Thurs., April 11, vegetable/specialty crop outlook, world ag/grain situation, world oilseed situation, world cotton situation; Fri., April 12, outlook for developing economies; Tues., April 16, milk production, crop/weather update, ag resources outlook (land values). (These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling!)

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.
Material changed at 5 p.m., EST, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE
(Week of April 4, 6 & 8)

- FEATURES --** Lynn Wyvill reports on how to start a home-based business; a second report features some craftsmen & women who have successfully built home-based businesses. Pat O'Leary reports on farmers considering kenaf as an alternative crop.
- ACTUALITIES --** USDA Chief Meteorologist Norton Strommen on the latest 90-day weather outlook, hard red winter wheat conditions & the drought in California; USDA Economist Verner Grise on tobacco production; USDA Economist Dave Harvey on the growth of the U.S. aquaculture industry & C. Alan Pettibone, president of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, on the NASDA Food Exposition in Las Vegas April 30 - May 2.
- UPCOMING FEATURES --** DeBoria Janifer reports on fat in the American diet. Pat O'Leary reports on the National Grove of State Trees at the U.S. National Arboretum. Lynn Wyvill reports on safe handling of food by consumers.

Available on Satellite Westar IV, Transponder 12D (Channel 23), audio 6.2 or 6.8:

THURSDAY 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EST
SATURDAY 10 - 10:45 a.m., EST
MONDAY 8 - 8:45 a.m., EST

OFFMIKE

BIG INCREASE...in cotton acreage is underway in the region served by Jerry Gehman (WASG, Atmore, Ala.), up 30 percent statewide in two years. Demand is forecast to keep pace with production; that's helping to make producers smile. Jerry says the boll weevil eradication program is a major factor in making possible the acreage increase.

SOIL EROSION...problem was made visible recently in eastern Iowa. Mike Buchanan (KBIZ, Ottumwa) says dust picked up by high winds in Kansas and Oklahoma became mixed with rain and produced a cake of mud. Windshield wipers just spread it around. Abundance of moisture has delayed planting. No changes expected from planting intentions. Mike's station sponsors the Southeast Farmer of the Year award, honoring an individual's contributions to agriculture & community. The banquet on Ag Day filled the local hotel's ballroom. Mike says the project serves as a boost for the region & the station.

Farm Broadcasters Letter

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SHIVERING SEASON...remains in force, says Bob Flint (WCFR, Springfield, Vt.) but early field work is underway on farms alongside the Connecticut River. Bob says several small dairy farms in his area have been sold to larger operators.

DAIRY PRODUCERS...are hurting in Michigan, says Patrick Driscoll (Michigan Farm Radio Net, Milan), but its too early to predict results of a shakeout. Pat says cherry producers are not doing well; over-production has dropped prices below costs.

TRIUMPH OF AGRICULTURE...exhibition was covered live by Kim Dlouhy (WOW, Omaha, Neb.) & crew. Kim says attendance was up from last year. Kim is a member of the Omaha Agribusiness Club board of directors & helping to plan activities for the remainder of the year.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vic Powell".

VIC POWELL
Chief, Radio & TV Division